

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph at page 2, lines 4 through 13 with the following amended paragraph:

Rikukawa et al., Prog. Polym. Sci. 25 (2000) 1463-1502 discloses a C2-alkylphosphonated polybenzimidazole, i.e. a polybenzimidazole having covalent bound phosphonic acid groups. The conductivity observed is 10^{-3} S/cm, measured as a press compact. Although the polymer described has an elevated conductivity, it is unsuitable for the formation of polymer films by casting from polar, aprotic solvents such as dimethylacetamide (DMAc). The polymer obtained by deprotonation of polybenzimidazole with lithium hydride and subsequent reaction with 2- chloroethylphosphonic acid is, according to Rikukawa et al., insoluble in all organic solvents and therefore unsuitable for the production of polymer membranes by classical methods.

Please replace the paragraph at page 1, lines 8 through 14, with the following amended paragraph:

Polyazoles such as CELAZOLE®-brand polybenzimidazoles (®Celazole) have been known for a long time. Such polybenzimidazoles (PBIs) are usually prepared by reacting 3,3',4,4'- tetraaminobiphenyl with isophthalic acid or diphenylisophthalic acid or esters thereof in a solid-state polymerization. The resulting prepolymer solidifies in the reactor and is subsequently comminuted mechanically. The pulverulent prepolymer is subsequently fully polymerized at temperatures of up to 400°C and the desired polybenzimidazole is obtained.